DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 473 IR 007 947

AUTHOR Benson, Gregory, Jr.
TITLE The National Education Practice File Development Project: A Summary of Phase I Activities and Plans for Phase II.
INSTITUTION Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc., Scotia, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Aug 78
NOTE 21p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Data Bases; *Educational Resources; Information Processing; *Information Retrieval; Program Design; *Program Development; Relevance (Information Retrieval); *Systems Analysis; Systems Approach

ABSTRACT

The stated goal of the project is "to accomplish the design and pilot test of a file of educational practices compatible with and complementary to ERIC." This summary of the phase I (design) documentation outlines product requirements, and describes activities and outcomes to complete those requirements. Eight products are discussed in the report: (1) file idea list, (2) review of related information products and services, (3) screened file idea list, (4) preliminary design feature alternatives, (5) feasibility discussion of alternatives, (6) file design, (7) evaluation/test design, and (8) a revised phase II plan. An executive summary of these phase II plans includes discussion of the creation, pilot testing, and evaluation of a test practice file. Lists of the internal advisory committee and project advisory group committee complete this summary of the report. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

IR

BRS Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.

ED180473

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICE FILE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: A SUMMARY OF PHASE I ACTIVITIES AND PLANS FOR PHASE II

Gregory Benson, Jr.
Project Director

August, 1978

IR000947

Introduction

The National Education Practice File Development Project was funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in October, 1977, to accomplish the design (Phase I) and pilot test (Phase II) of a file of educational practices compatible with and complementary to ERIC. This summary document outlines the NIE product requirements during Phase I and the BRS activities and outcomes related to those requirements. The Phase I products themselves are detailed, voluminous documentation, therefore, this summary was prepared to bring those interested up-to-date as economically (from financial and reading time perspectives) as possible.

For those interested in the full text of the products described in this summary, the full Phase I documentation will be submitted to ERIC within a month or two. For those now engaged in file development activities and desirous of hard copy of the documents as quickly as possible, BRS will make them available on a reproduction cost-recovery bases. If hard copy is desired, write to the Project Director at BRS.

Summary of Phase I

The expressed purpose and objectives of Phase I were to (1.) select a file for development which optimally satisfied four objectives (utility, technical feasibility, policy contraints and cost efficiency), and (2.) produce design specifications for developing and testing a file. The RFP specifications called for the submission of eight products (in addition to monthly progress reports) during the six-month Phase I period.

This review of Phase I is summarized by product, indicating the (1.) RFP requirement for the product, (2.) the BRS activities undertaken to generate the product, and (3.) a summary of the findings or outcomes embraced by the product.

Product 1.1 (File Idea List)

RFP Requirement:

This product will show the range of alternatives for defining the content coverage of a bibliographic reference file. It will include a list of fifteen or more ideas for defining the content coverage for new reference files in the domain of education practice-related information.

BRS Activities:

Since the RFP did not allow for any formalized data collection requiring OMB clearance during Phase I, BRS undertook a concentrated schedule of personal interviews and group discussions across the country. These discussions put project staff in direct contact with the following agencies:

-Education Commission of the States
-National Education Association
-Council of Chief State School Officers
-Far West Educational Laboratory
-Northwest Educational Laboratory

-San Mateo Educational Resource Center
-University of Southern California (NIMIS)
-New York State Education Department

Also, representatives of the following educational agencies or programs were interviewed in group or individual sessions:

-State Education Agencies
-Intermediate Education Agencies
-Local education agencies
-Research and Development Exchange program
-Higher educational agencies
-ERIC clearinghouses
-Educational resource centers
-Teachers centers
-National Diffusion Network
-Women's Equity Project
-Research and Development Utilization program
-State Capacity Building program
-City school districts
-Commercial publishers
-Educational consulting firms

Visitations and meetings were scheduled with agencies, programs and individuals that represented educational areas complementary to those areas represented by the Project Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members provided their input and generation of ideas at the initial meeting of that group held in Washington, D.C., on December 14 and 15, 1977. (Membership lists of both the internal NIE and external project advisory groups are attached.)

In all cases, discussions with individuals or groups centered around the file features of content, acquisitions, selection, processing, file maintenance, vocabulary development, source document availability, search and retrieval capability, user products and user services. The consistent

focus of discussion on those file design features throughout Phase I documentation provides a framework for relating all Phase I products and facilities a historical tracing of the file design specifications proposed for development and testing during Phase II.

Findings/Outcomes

A summary of file feature suggestions provided by educators representing the agencies mentioned above follows.

Content Coverage

-Major variable relates to where a source (specific file content) falls on the "autonomy of Resource Continuum" - Can a teacher use it without technical assistance and/or a large budget.

-Other variables relate to level, content, media type, availability and level of evaluation.

Acquisitions

-Interactive vs. limited interactive vs. one-way technically mediated communication links are alternatives related to the interaction between acquisition organizations and the file operational center (no technically mediated link is also an alternative which is representative of the current ERIC system).

-Nationally vs. regionally vs. State vs. intermediate based core of acquisition efforts are alternatives related to an ultimate design configuration.

Selection

-With regard to practice performance criteria, suggestions were on a continuum from those having only recent, hard data demonstrating success to, those with no data, or data demonstrating failu[illegible].

-With regard to the selection process, suggestions were on a continuum from centralized authority to, decentralized, direct input authority. Approximately mid-point in that continuum might be a multi-level system of referral upward to a centralized authority with screening taking place at each level.

Processing

-Should be ERIC compatible with the inclusion of new information fields as is appropriate to the content decided upon.

Vocabulary Development and Maintenance

-Use ERIC vocabulary with the addition of new "practice-oriented" terms and provision for more efficient term addition or deletion.

File Maintenance

-Online file input and content modification capability was felt to be a necessity. Extent and organization of this online capability shall be determined by resources available.

Source Availability

-For a document-based resource, the preference was for local availability of the actual documentation through resource centers. Funding restrictions shall probably dictate microforms of printed source material.

-For non-print resources, the preference was also for local availability. Funding restrictions will probably dictate at least regional depositories.

-For practices whose source is really a process, it was suggested that the developers have the responsibility for dissemination and/or technical assistance much the same as NDN Demonstrators have now.

Search and Retrieval System

-The alternatives suggested here related primarily to format modifications (the addition of information fields) and did not appear to be constrained by any technical limitations.

User Products and Services

-With regard to products, suggestions were consistent with products currently being produced by ERIC clearinghouses with the exception of video or audio distribution of awareness level information on many practices contained in the file and repackaging the monthly announcement vehicle in a SDI mode.

-With regard to services, a strong training and orientation function was felt to be necessary. Also, the intermediary service function was felt to be critical especially for that content which cannot stand alone.

Organization for Operating the File

-Since content and the acquisition procedure shall drive the major portion of the external organization configuration, the emphasis here was placed on what incentives shall be utilized to sustain system collaborative efforts. Mandate, money and mutual benefit (to contributor and system) were suggested as key incentives.

-The central organization consisted of a national clearinghouse for educational practices that was complementary to other ERIC clearinghouses and dependant on central ERIC functions to a large degree. The basic technical departure from other ERIC clearinghouses would be the centralization of the database to allow for online updating, purging, acquisitions input and editing.

Specifics regarding content suggestions, ERIC format modifications and file maintenance procedures can be found in Product 1.1, but generally they relate to content more oriented to the practitioner, information fields to allow for more detailed searching and "real time" file maintenance procedures through use of online capability.

Product 1.2 (Review of Related Information Products and Services)

RFP Requirements:

The purpose of this product is to identify existing information products and services with which a new bibliographic reference file in the domain of education practice-related information should be coordinated. It will consist of a brief summary of the existing information products and services which may be related due to similar content coverage, or related design features (p. 11).

BRS Activities/Outcomes:

By mutual agreement between BRS and the NIE project monitor, it was decided that this product be prepared in two parts. The first part was designed to fill in possible gaps resulting from not visiting all information centers as part of the activities of Product 1.1 and to determine if, in fact, the "ideas" generated in 1.1 were duplicative of any existing resources. Brickley and Trohoski of RISE assisted with this initial task and found that ... "there is presently no existing, practice-based, educational information product or service of a comprehensive, nationwide, machine-readable file nature".

Part II of Product 1.2 was not a separate document, but rather an extensive literature review, also undertaken by Brickley and Trohoski, that either supported or failed to support alternatives being considered in Product 1.4/1.5 (Preliminary Design Feature Alternatives and Discussion of Their Feasibility for a National Education Practice File). The literature citations generated by Brickley and Trohoski are represented in the bibliography attached to Product 1.4/1.5. This support literature aided greatly in the consideration of the alternatives for implementation during Phase II.

Product 1.3 (Screened File Idea List)

RFP Requirement:

The purpose of this product is to document the decision to select three alternative file ideas. DRG will select three (3) ideas for files in the education practice-related domain from those presented in Product 1.1. The contractor will record those selected and submit that recored to DRG (p. 11).

BRS Activities:

The prerequisite activities leading to this product were the creation of Product 1.1 and the scheduling of a meeting of the NIE Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) and BRS staff. At that meeting held on January 23, 1978, the IAC discussed each file feature (listed under Product 1.1 above) and the alternatives suggested by educators for each.

Outcomes:

For the critical file design feature of "content", the IAC used three criteria for eliminating alternatives presented in Product 1.1. They were: (1.) not related to instruction; (2.) some or all documentation is already available through other sources; and (3.) obviously not feasible given the present level of resources, technology and policy problems. The resultant discussion of "content" led to the generic classifications used in later documentation which are: (1.) NDN/SEA validated practices; (2.) exemplary practices; and (3.) non-validated practices including those locally and commercially developed.

The file features were dealt with in three sets and the alternatives suggested by the IAC for further exploration and feasibility analysis in Product 1.4/1.5 are shown in the following diagram.

Alternatives for Feasibility Analysis

I

Content Coverage

- NDN/SEA Validated
- Exemplary
- Non-validated

Acquisitions

- use new ERIC Clearinghouse for all operations
- use existing ERIC Clearinghouse for all operations (one or more)
- use non-ERIC organization for acquisitions

Selection

- use learner outcomes w/screening
- review panel
- all practices, site evaluation where applicable
- multi-level criteria
- use learner outcomes w/o screening

Source Availability

- abstracts/descriptions only
- abstracts/descriptions and documentation

II

Processing

Include the following information fields:

- Evaluation Type/Outcomes
- Funding Source
- Location
- Initiation date
- Target population
- Contact person
- Materials availability and cost
- Recommended by
- Replication costs
- Transferability scale
- Extent of TA required
- Material use
- Update info

File Maintenance

- Develop system purge/update capability (explore vaviations

Vocabulary Development and Maintenance

- Use ERIC Thesaurus, adding new terms where appropriate

Search and Retrieval

- Practice File searchable with ERIC

III

User Products

- SDI-type newsletter publication
- Audio and/or video presentation of selected practices
- Lists by media
- Monthly/annual catalog
- Lists by topic
- Information analysis products
- The "best of the practice file"

User Services

- Online ordering capability
- Online user feedback capability
- General system orientation program
- An '800' phone number

Product 1.4/1.5 Preliminary Design Feature Alternatives and Discussion of Their Feasibility

RFP Requirements:

Product 1.4

Preliminary Design

The purpose of this product is to present a preliminary plan for designing files based on the ideas documented in Product 1.3.

Product 1.5

Feasibility Analysis

The purpose of this product is to provide DRG with the contractor's analysis of each preliminary design. A feasibility analysis will be submitted for each of the three preliminary designs described in Product 1.4. This analysis will address the file objectives shown in Section 1.c (utility, technical feasibility, policy issues and cost efficiency).

BRS Activities:

At the IAC meeting on January 23, it was agreed that Products 1.4 and 1.5 could be combined for ease and efficiency of preparation. It was also agreed that rather than presenting three discrete, full file configurations, each file feature alternative would be discussed independently but in context with other alternatives within the same feature. This was determined because selecting certain file feature alternatives had the effect of limiting what alternatives might be considered from within other file features. This would have led to an endless series of "if then..." propositions exploring each possible combination of feature alternatives. The decision, then, led to Product 1.4/1.5 being presented in two parts, Part I, a discussion of each alternative and Part II, the suggested file design for the pilot test.

BRS produced a draft of Part I and submitted it to the Project Advisory Group on March 1, 1978. On March 16th that group met and (1.) provided further input to the Part I discussion and (2.) through a modified delphi technique reached consensus on the suggested file design to be presented in Part II. BRS then completely recreated Product 1.4/1.5 and submitted it to NIE on April 3, 1978. On April 10th, the IAC met to discuss Product 1.4/1.5 and provide BRS with guidance regarding the pilot test parameters.

Outcomes:

With minor exceptions, the IAC accepted the suggested design configuration presented in Product 1.4/1.5. A summary of the recommended guidelines for the pilot test that grew directly out of the meeting on March 10th is attached as Appendix D of Product 1.6/1.7/1.8.

Product 1.6 (File Design)

RFP Requirements:

The purpose of this product is to provide DRG with one completed file design for implementation during Phase II. A final design will be submitted for the file selected from among alternatives presented in Product 1.4. The final design will include specifications for the file. Specifications should include the necessary guidance for developing tools, procedures and other elements necessary to actually construct the test file and user product.

BRS Activities:

BRS secured the assistance of Brickley and Trohoski to prepare the product. This was done in order to allow BRS contract staff to devote full attention to Product 1.7/1.8 (the revised Phase II plan).

Outcomes:

Product 1.6 is an operational description of the file design suggested in Product 1.4/1.5. It includes guidance for operationalizing the file features inherent in the design. Product 1.6 is attached as Appendix C of Product 1.7/1.8 and is a tentative "guide" for processing practices into the file.

Product 1.7 (Evaluation/Test Design)

RFP Requirements:

The purpose of this product is to indicate how the file will be tested and evaluated during Phase II. The research plan, logistical arrangements (e.g., announcing the test service, delivery of service), work plan and cost estimate will be submitted for approval.

BRS Activities:

BRS had originally proposed that Dr. Richard Lavin coordinate the pilot test activities. Since Dr. Lavin would have that ultimate involvement, BRS secured Dr. Lavin for assistance in preparing Product 1.7 material.

In addition, BRS felt that the evaluation design for the pilot should include not only output or "user oriented" data as required by the RFP, but also formative data to explore and inform project management regarding the adequacy of procedures and relationships required to build the test file. In that regard, BRS secured assistance from Magi Educational Services, Inc. (Dr. Ronald Szczypkowski) to develop a full evaluation plan in conjunction with Dr. Lavin.

BRS staff met and conferred with the consultants to discuss the parameters of Product 1.7 requirements since it is a significant component of the Phase II plan.

Outcomes:

Product 1.7 requirements have emerged as significant documentation detailing the pilot test and the evaluation design to be utilized during the test period. Product 1.7 material has been merged into Product 1.8 since Product 1.8 must include the planned pilot test and evaluation. The specific sections representing Product 1.7 are Objectives #2 and #3 contained in Product 1.7/1.8.

Product 1.7/1.8 (Revised Phase II Plan for National Education Practice File Development Project Including: Creation; Pilot Testing; and Evaluation of a Test Practice File)

This product represents a culmination of the learnings of Phase I and is the "proposal" for Phase II. An "Executive Summary" of that document follows.

Executive Summary:

As projected in the original proposal submitted to NIE by BRS in the Summer of 1977, the development of files for educational practices and for human resources has proceeded at a rapid pace. This growth is accompanied by a certain number of problems usually associated with rapid expansion -- fragmentation, unnecessary duplication and incompatibility. The Education Practice File Development Project can play an important role in addressing these problems by producing a superior system which others will choose to adopt. The pilot test designs presented in Product 1.7/1.8 for Phase II represent the next major step in implementing a quality system for developing a nationwide dissemination system.

Phase I activities were addressed to the development of a design for the Practice File and for a pilot test of its operation. Using a variety of informal interviews and group discussions with educators and educational organizations, BRS identified the major options with respect to content,

selection, acquisitions and other file features. A parallel study of existing information products and services, as well as a thorough review of the literature, were undertaken. Based upon this material, BRS, in conjunction with a Project Advisory Committee, prepared a screened idea list for all features of the proposed new file. Following a review by the NIE Internal Advisory Committee, BRS prepared an analysis of alternatives for each feature and a suggested file design for the pilot test. Following a second review by the Internal Advisory Committee, BRS developed a detailed file design for the pilot test, a formative and summative design for evaluating the pilot, and a detailed proposal for the conduct of Phase II activities.

As was the case with Phase I, a small number of methodological and logistical problems will need to be addressed in Phase II. New and expanded relationships will need to be established in order to ensure that such areas as acquisitions and user products and services are developed adequately. New incentives and outreach activities will need to be employed in order to establish closer ties with the practitioner community. Relationships with the existing ERIC Clearinghouse structure will need to be maintained and Bob Howe has been named as the project liaison for this purpose.

Orientation and training of new users also will be an important requirement of Phase II activities. Unless information center personnel understand and can use the File, the pilot test will be inadequate. Finally, the pilot test will require a rigorous evaluation if we are to inform future refinement and expansion of the File during field testing and full-scale operations.

The statement of work for Phase II proposes that a "mock clearinghouse" be established for the pilot test to inform NIE on this aspect of file implementation and operation. Proposed content options deviate from the simulation proposed in the original proposal and shall include NDN/SEA validated programs and locally developed materials. An acquisition plan shall

shall also be developed for commercially produced materials though the decision to actually input this material will be reserved until later in Phase II.

Because it is necessary to keep the acquisitions effort and the file size manageable during the pilot test, BRS will limit the subject area focus for SEA validated, locally developed and commercial materials to the content area equivalent to the scope of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education. This content focus will not be applied to NDN validated materials.

The conduct of the pilot test will include the use of the file in approximately twelve (12) sites located in various educational organizations and agencies throughout the country. Coordination of all activities of the network of sites will be accomplished by Dr. Richard Lavin of the Merrimach Education Center (MEC). Activities for the pilot test include: (1.) selecting a sample of sites for participation; (2.) training site personnel in the use of the system; (3.) providing on-going support services to all sites; and (4.) evaluating the use of practice information.

An evaluation of the development of the system and the outcomes of File use will also be undertaken. BRS has proposed that formative and summative evaluation be undertaken to provide objective documentation and analysis of the development and implementation of the File and to collaborate with the developers so that evaluative data are used within a framework to facilitate future decision-making.

As was the case during Phase I, BRS shall rely heavily upon the advice of the Project Advisory Group (PAG) for reactions to draft design products and for specific consultant assistance. Two meetings of the PAG and the IAC will be scheduled during Phase II. The scheduling of such meetings will be done so as to facilitate decisions by NIE on various policy questions. Gregory Benson will serve as project director and will be assisted by Charles Mojkowski in coordinating PAG and IAC activities and in preparing project -

documentation. Benson shall also oversee operations of the simulated clearinghouse assisted by Mr. Edward Hancock. Richard Lavin will coordinate pilot test network activities and Ronald Sczcypkowski shall coordinate evaluation activites.

Note:

Since Phase II has only recently been initiated (late July), specific details and activities are still being developed. Further information regarding Phase II can be acquired by contacting the Project Direct.

INTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(As of July 24, 1978)

Mr. Robert Chesley
Senior Associate
Dissemination and Resources Group
National Institute of Education
1200 19th St. N.W., Room 709
Washington, D.C. 20208

Mr. Charles Missar
Head
Educational Reference Center
National Institute of Education
1200 19th St. N.W., Room 705
Washington, D.C. 20208

Dr. Sue Klein
Senior Research Associate
Dissemination and Resources Group
National Institute of Education
1200 19th St. N.W., Room 705
Washington, D.C. 20208

Mr. Jerry Fletcher
Office of the Deputy Assistant
Secretary for Education
Policy Development, Room 335G
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Mr. Lou Walker
Acting Branch Chief
Eastern Program Operation Branch
Office of Education
7th and D Streets, S.W., Room 3616
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dr. Jon Schaffarzick
Research Associate
School Capacity for Problem Solving
National Institute of Education
1200 19th St., N.W., Room 815
Washington, D.C. 20203

Dr. John Coulson
Senior Associate
Dissemination and Resources Group
1200 19th St., N.W., Room 709
Washington, D.C. 20208

Mr. James Johnson
BEH, USOE
Donohoe Building, Room 4829
Washington, D.C. 20202

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

Mr. Edward Ball
Harper and Row Publishers
10 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022
212-593-7404

Mr. Rodney Barth
Illinois Office of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Mr. Ted Brandhorst
ERIC Facility
4833 Rugby Avenue, Suite 303
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
301-656-9723

Dr. Donald Ely
ERIC Clearinghouse for Information Resources
130 Huntington Hall
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13210
315-423-3640

Mr. Thomas Hartsig
Macomb Intermediate School District
44001 Garfield Road
Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043
313-286-8800

Dr. George French
Philadelphia School System
Room 330
21st Street and Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215-299-7000

Dr. Kenneth Komoski
Educational Products Information Exchange
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027
212-870-2330

Dr. Diane Lassman
The EXCHANGE: MPS/UM Teacher Center
155 Peik Hall
159 Pillsbury Drive Southeast
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612-376-5297

Dr. Diane MacIntyre
Far West Laboratory for Educational Research & Development
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94100
415-565-3076

Dr. Joel Magisos
Center for Vocational Education
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
614-486-3655

Mr. Harry Osgood
ACES
800 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06511
203-562-9967

Dr. Frank Thompson
ECOS Training Institute
833 Fox Meadow Road
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598
914-245-4009